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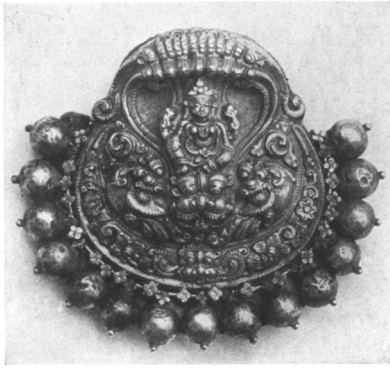
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ORIENTAL DECORATIVE ART



PENDANT, REPOUSSÉ GOLD
NORTH INDIAN

THE usefulness and importance of the Museum collections of Oriental decorative art have been materially increased by a purchase shown to the public this month for the first time. This acquisition includes a comprehensive collection of Indian jewelry, a unique group of Thibetan goldsmiths' work, a number of Indian gold brocades, two sets of Chinese head-dresses made for Manchu princesses, a large Chinese temple hanging in appliqué, and two gilded bronze deities of Thibetan origin. These objects were all brought together by Mr. Lockwood de Forest, the artist, who recently visited the East, largely in the interest of our Museum, and who has used his own relations with India, of many years' standing, for our benefit. Because of the intrinsic value of the many specimens of jewelry, all of the smaller objects are exhibited in the Gold Room, where they will remain for the present at least; while the brocades and the two statues are shown temporarily in the Room of Recent Accessions before they receive a more permanent place in the Museum galleries. The various classes of material are described below under separate headings.

THIBETAN JEWELRY

Thibet has been a mystery for centuries, since the Lama hierarchy, following a policy of exclusion, allowed no European to enter

its sacred capital at Lhasa. As a result, knowledge of modern Thibet and Thibetan art has been largely derived from the reports of a few explorers and from objects carried over the trade routes to China or by the Nepalese and Bhutanese traders down to India. However, with the English punitive expedition of 1904, under Colonel Younghusband, Lhasa was entered and a trade treaty arranged, so that in the last few years more light has been shed upon the characteristics of the native arts and crafts.

Thibetan art is an imitative one, based very largely upon Indian and Nepalese models, just as the national religion has for its basis the Buddhism of India. Furthermore, it is a hieratic art, the production being very largely in the hands of the Lamaseries or monasteries, which number in their ranks nearly one half of the entire population. It is of work of this type that the greater part of this collection is composed: three statues, a series of jewelry ornaments for the decoration of the statues, sacred objects to be placed before the images, amulet boxes, and a few articles of personal adornment.

The collection is thought to be unique, as comparatively few specimens of Thibetan jewelwork have been brought out of the country and no other museum, even in India, is said to show such a number of elaborately jeweled examples.

Of chief interest is the full-sized head of Avalokita, the patron saint of Thibet. This is of copper repoussé overlaid with gold, with an elaborate five-pointed tiara. The ears have the customary prolonged lobes—a sign of wisdom—pierced for the attachment of jeweled earrings, and the forehead bears the sacred urna or luminous mark which distinguishes the Buddha or Bodhisattva. It is interesting to compare this with the head of Avalokita, acquired by the South Kensington Museum in 1911, which is supposed to have come from the great temple at Shigatsé.

The two other statues are of Drolma, the Goddess of Mercy, called in Sanskrit Tārā—perhaps the most popular of all Thibetan deities—for while most of the other gods cannot be approached except

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HEAD OF AVALOKITA, COPPER GILT
THIBETAN

through the mediation of a lama, the poorest layman can secure her immediate attention by a direct appeal. These figures are of cast copper, decorated with chased and incised work overlaid with gold. They are represented standing in mystic attitude on lotus thrones, which are fitted with detachable aureole-backs bearing mythical figures amid scrolled clouds and conventional flames.

jewelry are five ornaments, as well as a large plaque which was probably used as a cover for a copy of one of the Holy Buddhist Gospels. These five ornaments—the two plates, the cover of a libation bowl, the gold box used to keep the jewels of the idols, and the fifth, which recalls the form of the emblematic luck jewel—were placed on the altar in front of the sacred images. There is also a series of neck ornaments and



PLAQUE, JEWELLED
THIBETAN

The partiality of the Thibetans for turquoise and coral is extraordinary, their ecclesiastical and personal jewelry being set with masses of these stones, as well as lapis lazuli, diamonds, emeralds, and a variety of semi-precious gems. The turquoise is particularly esteemed by the people, who attribute to it talismanic virtue, believing that the stone guards against the Evil Eye and brings good luck and health.

Among the examples of ecclesiastical

earrings, heavily jeweled and set in silver-gilt, which were used as decorations for the statues of the gods.

All the other objects can be classed as personal jewelry. The Thibetan is extraordinarily fond of personal adornment and practically the entire population wear charm boxes (*gawo*) suspended around their necks. There are three of these *gawo* in the collection. Originally each contained some unintelligible Sanskrit words, or perhaps a bit of the gown of a saintly lama

—anything that would be efficacious in warding off the various accidents which might overtake the bearer. The collection includes a number of earrings, two among them being of the long variety worn singly in the left ear by men of consequence. Of women's earrings there are several pairs, all heavily jeweled, so heavily in fact that usually a little strap passes over the ear to take the weight off the lobe. Other examples of women's jewelry are circular plaques for the hair and a heavy silver girdle of a type used partly for ornament and partly as the means of support for the silver implements of the toilet, worn on jeweled chatelaines, two of which are included in the collection.

W. M. M.

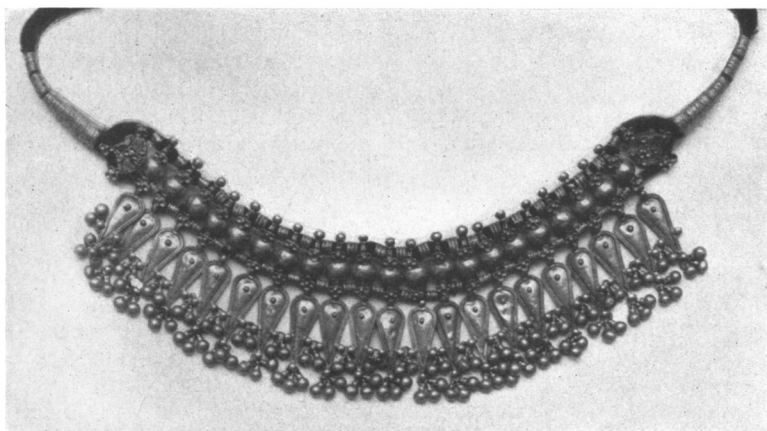
INDIAN JEWELRY

In the complex and highly organized national life of India, jewelry has passed from the condition of a desirable but useless adornment to that of a prime necessity, serving as a badge of caste, a favorite offering to the gods, and a most popular means of investing private fortunes. From the cradle to the grave, from the lowest rank to the highest, the racial taste for personal adornment in both men and women has always amounted to a passion among the various Indian peoples, and from remote periods jewelry has had a high place in native poetry and legend.

Throughout the country it is the religious duty of a wife to wear jewelry for her husband's pleasure, as it is required of a widow to put aside most of her ornaments during the rest of her life. The age of a child is shown by the jewelry worn, just as an unmarried girl is indicated by her necklaces, and a married woman by a peculiar armlet or bangle, and in some regions, the nose-ring, invariable as the wedding-ring of the West. Such ornaments are serious and inevitable and when a woman is too poor to afford gold and silver, she substitutes the same objects made in silk or cotton thread, if she be of high caste, and of brass or zinc, if low. Whole families will often borrow money at a ruinous rate of interest in order to pro-

cure the jewelry which custom has prescribed as obligatory. Many gems and certain forms are thought of as amulets, while adherents of various sects wear jewels of fixed number and pattern in honor of their particular deities. Each member of the body is made to carry its share of ornaments, which are most varied in shape and decoration, and include necklaces, bracelets, rings for ears, fingers, toes, and nose, as well as anklets, armlets, belts, head-pieces, and many other types. A prince will have great stores of such things, displaying his splendor by a constant change of necklaces and trappings, while a rich man or banker carries about on his back a large part of his capital in the form of jewelry. Travelers also invest their funds in ornaments which they wear and sell bit by bit as need arises, and almost every family has its hoarded equipment of jewelry, which is as useful as coin in business transactions. Statues of the gods are hung with jeweled offerings; elephant and horse-harness, palace and temple furniture, arms and armor are still sometimes made of gold, silver, and gems; while in times not long past even favorite temples and pavilions were enriched with goldsmiths' work in the form of necklaces hung around columns and in windows, both without and within. The accumulated wealth of India in such material is enormous and not easy to exaggerate, although the very name of the country has always inspired avaricious dreams in the western imagination to which gold of Ophir and mines of Golconda are synonyms for boundless riches.

The history of Indian jewelry can be accurately followed from ancient monuments where the ornaments of divine personages are worked out in great detail. Many of the forms made and worn today are of great antiquity, having changed but little with the passage of centuries; while the names are often equally ancient, a number of those included in Panini's grammar of the fourth century B. C. being now employed. The primitive and still current custom of using garlands of seeds or of fresh flowers is reflected in pattern and name of many jeweled ornaments,



GOLD NECKLACE, INDIAN
SHOWING CLASSICAL INFLUENCE



JWELED NECKLACE
JAIPUR OR DELHI

which often suggest in form the flowery originals from which the types derive. Thus a certain kind of gold beadwork is called the *champakali* or "champa-flower bud," while a particular necklace is referred to as a "garland of enchantment," the *mohan mala*, and earrings are termed "ear-flowers," or *karanphul*.

Other kinds of goldwork reflect very strongly the influence of Greek and Roman civilization, which first penetrated into India with Alexander the Great and was several times revived, leaving its chief imprint on the sculptures of Gandhara, of which a good collection is owned by the Museum. A number of the unjeweled bracelets and necklaces now shown in the Gold Room might be easily mistaken for ancient classical ornaments from the shore of the Mediterranean, were they not obviously the modern repetitions of time-honored types preserved through twenty centuries by Indian workmen tenacious of tradition. Actual specimens of early gold jewelry are, however, difficult to find, because of the custom of frequently melting up and reworking the most intrinsically valuable of the family or temple possessions; and it is doubtful whether many of the Museum pieces antedate the eighteenth century, while the majority of those included in the purchase probably date from a later period.

As has been said, artistic traditions of pattern and design are carefully cherished by the native *sunar* or goldsmith; but recently a great and inevitable change has taken place through the introduction of European methods and ideas, and the old forms are either marked for destruction or have already died out. Much of the contemporary jewelry used in India is made after bad European models and the pieces are extremely meretricious in effect, although materials and workmanship are practically as good as ever. The collection acquired by the Museum includes the older jewelry, which shows pure Indian types, free from the modern European taint which has penetrated so disastrously through the East. The native goldsmith's decline in taste, however, should really be fastened on his employers, whether jewelry mer-

chants, who handle such wares in quantities, or native princes who have brought back European ideas to be worked out at home. The *sunar's* position has always been that of a workman, often attached to one particular merchant or family, who brought his simple tools to the employer's house and there utilized the materials given him, following designs made by some independent artist or else dictated by the prospective owner. In outlying places one goldsmith will make a piece of jewelry complete from the beginning of the process to the end, but the best work is not produced in such a way and for more elaborate specimens one must go to the large cities, where a division of labor is practised and a number of skilled artisans of different sorts will labor in succession on a single article. The jeweler, however, plays an important part in national life, his profession is very well regarded, and his caste rank comparatively high, although his reputation for dishonesty forms the subject of many sharp proverbs.

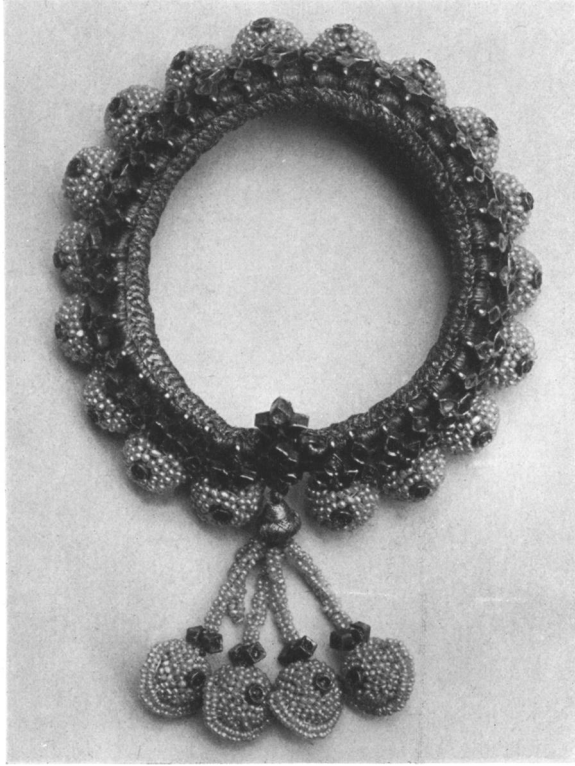
The gold and much of the silver used is imported, but the jewels are a native product and besides many semi-precious varieties include emeralds, diamonds, rubies, and pearls, all of which are found in great quantity in various parts of the country. The native lapidary prefers to cut his clear stones in cabuchon form or table-topped, rather than faceted, as is the European method, although the latter style is making some headway, with unfortunate results when used in native setting. The favorite Indian procedure is to back the stone with foil and imbed it in gold, raising a bezel all around and flush with the jewel; and when a considerable surface is encrusted in this way the effect is sumptuous and splendid, as may be seen from several necklaces in the Museum collection. Another method of using jewels is to drill and string them either quite simply or else with gold ornaments interspersed. Pearls are grouped in prodigal masses, generally in conjunction with colored stones but rarely with much gold. Paste jewels are also made in quantities and often set in the same piece with genuine stones so that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. When paste

alone is used, the setting may be as elaborate as for real gems, since the native craftsman as a rule does not allow the amount of his labor to be governed by the value of his materials.

Lac is a favorite addition to goldwork and is made either into beads of various colors, sometimes painted and gilt, or else used as a filling for the very thin gold

necklace or bracelet handed over to the customer.

Another means of enriching metal is enameling, which the Indian workman has brought to a state of high technical perfection. His method is that termed in Europe "champlevé," where the surface of a solid piece of gold, silver, or copper is carved out and the depressions filled with



PEARL ANKLET, DELHI

repoussé in which the sunar excels. Some of the most decorative ornaments in the collection illustrate this technique. A curious sidelight on native business methods is shown in the purchase of such a piece, from which, before a price can be fixed, the vendor insists on melting out the lac or wax filling, so that the exact weight of the gold alone can be calculated and an established per cent added for workman's labor. After an accurate valuation is thus found, each bead is laboriously refilled and the

enamel, which is then fixed by a fusing heat and finally polished flush with the ground. The range of Indian enamel colors is wide, but a clear ruby red, a translucent green, and an opaque white are most characteristic and most often combined. Nearly all first-rate jeweled ornaments are enameled with fine patterns in the back, so that the reverse of a necklace or pendant may be finer in effect than the right side. The art of enameling is largely confined to Northern India, and Jaipur is

famous as excelling all other centers of manufacture, although a number of localities produce a limited amount of coarser enamel. Jaipur work is well represented in the Museum collection.

As to the provenance of the other pieces purchased by the Museum, numbering in



PORTION OF SCARF (SARI)
IN GOLD BROCADE

all one hundred and two examples of gold jewelry and eighteen of silver, it may be said that they were found mostly at Ahmedabad on the west coast, but that the place of manufacture of a large proportion was probably Delhi, which is the center of the jewelry trade at the present day. Gold ornaments travel all over India and the local customs of wear and form have be-

come of late so much less rigid that jewelry of any type may be found in almost any part of the peninsula. Elaborate conventions, of course, exist and the strict Parsee does not wear the jewels of the Hindu, or the Mohammedan of either, or one village those of the next; but types are repeated in widely distant regions, and the differences really exist more in the manner of wearing than in the form of the ornaments. The subject is discussed in detail by Colonel T. H. Hendley in the *Journal of Indian Art*, vol. XII, and also by A. P. Charles in his monograph on Gold and Silver Ware, one of the official reports prepared for the British Government in its effort to stem the decadence which for a generation has threatened with extinction the art of the Indian jeweler and goldsmith. In the Museum collection, as has been said, the endeavor has been made to include only such pieces as represent the older and purer types; and as these are every day passing out of sight, the collection has a double interest in that it will probably be impossible to procure similar specimens again. The needs of the producing Occidental jeweler were another element which entered largely into the forming of the collection, and any one actively interested in gem setting and goldsmiths' work should find here valuable suggestion as to both technique and design, since the majority of the pieces parallel in use our contemporary western jewelry, and the more exotic ornaments were not included.

INDIAN TEXTILES

The fifteen examples of Indian weaving are shown in the Accessions Room. They include three *jama* or full-dress coats made of brocade woven in silk, cotton, gold, and silver, a variety of textile known as "kin-cob," the best production of the Indian loom. An unusual piece is the so-called throne carpet from Gujarat, cotton printed in color and gold by an interesting process involving the beating of gold leaf into the cloth, and the use of block printing and resist dyeing. The other textiles are all *saris*, the long scarfs used by women as an outer garment or robe, and one of the most

picturesque features of Indian costume. These saris are chiefly of loosely woven cotton almost veil-like in lightness, ornamented with designs interwoven in gold and silver with very decorative results. Silk is sometimes used, but as the Mohammedan is forbidden by law to wear pure silk, cotton is generally mixed in. The borders and ends are the most highly ornamented parts and the pattern work lavished on them is very fine. The type is ancient and similar stuffs have been widely exported both East and West since before the Christian era, the art of weaving being one of the oldest and most perfect which India has developed. Many passages in classical literature seem to refer to materials brought out of India, and prized as more beautiful than anything the West could produce.

CHINESE OBJECTS

A large temple hanging in appliqué exhibits a method of decoration rather uncommon in the Far East. The subject is the Bodhisattva called in Japanese Mandjus'rî, who rides on a monster and represents the apotheosis of transcendental wisdom. The hanging dates from about the sixteenth century and comprises a considerable variety of early brocades. The two complete head-dresses made for Chinese princesses, and the unmounted ornaments forming a third set, have the interest which every example of Chinese workmanship possesses. Each set consists of about a dozen pieces of very fine goldsmiths' work, richly ornamented with pearls and semi-precious stones, forming flowers and butterflies which vibrate with every movement of the wearer and produce an unreal and fantastic effect. The ground-work is made of plates of gold pierced and carved and overlaid with feathers of the kingfisher bird, which in their bright blues and greens outrival any enamel. Head-dresses of this kind are peculiar to ladies of the Manchu nobility, and these examples come from the family of Prince Lui for whom they were made about the middle of the nineteenth century. The manufacture of similar goldsmiths' work has practically ceased.

D. F.

A CHINESE LANDSCAPE

A RECENT copy of the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* contains an article by Dr. John C. Ferguson on Wang Ch'uan. The picture to which reference is made is Wang Ch'uan Villa, by Kuo Chung-shu of the Sung Dynasty, and is described in the catalogue of Chinese paintings (No. 18) issued by the Museum. The following extracts from the article will be of interest:

The landscape, of course, refers to Wang Ch'uan, this place being as closely linked in Chinese literature with the name of Wang Wei as Stratford-on-Avon is with Shakespeare. Wang Ch'uan was neither a large nor an important place when Wang Wei built a house there as a refuge from the cares of the world. It would never have been known outside of its immediate neighborhood if it had not been the residence of Wang Wei and the subject of his famous poem.

In the mountainous district of the southern part of Lan-t'ien, on the banks of a small mountain stream which wanders down through the valley, Wang Wei built a home for himself. His had been a stormy, nervous life. As a youth he must have been of a reflective turn of mind, for it is said that he could compose poetry at nine years of age. His course of life was rapid and eventful. He attained to the highest literary rank, and to a responsible position in the government service. The rebel An Lu-shan admired his ability and carried him off into captivity, where he tried in vain to compel Wang Wei to use his talents in favor of the rebellion. Wang would not even curry favor with his captor by writing verses to entertain guests. Through the prolonged efforts of his brother Wang Tsin, he was finally released and brought back to the capital, but his reckless independence of spirit landed him in further trouble with the princes. He preferred his literary and religious friends to those whom he found in court circles. He did not hesitate to condemn the extravagance and excesses of the palace life. Public service, with